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ABSTRACT

The guide provides adult literacy teachers with background information in adult learning and the performance-based approach to literacy education. The first section reviews theory and research on adult learning, including the factors affecting learning (language background, expectations, gender, learning styles and modes, age and health, educational background), the characteristics and needs of literate and non-literate learners, the differences between teaching English to native speakers and to non-native speakers, and specific classroom techniques for increasing both motivation and retention. The second section outlines the rationale for performance-based literacy instruction and reviews the use of the whole language approach, sight words, and phonics; the role of document literacy (or form language) for this population; numeracy; and employment-related content for beginning readers. Supplementary information is provided in appendixes. (Contains 26 references.) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education) (MSE)

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ED 433 730

What Non-Readers or Beginning Readers Need to Know:

Performance-Based ESL Adult Literacy

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ELT
Technical Assistance for
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preface

Step into a refugee's shoes and imagine that you have just arrived in the U.S., where everything is new to you. Your future, and your health and safety and that of your family, are linked to the information systems of a computer-based bureaucracy. Which of the following would you want to be able to recognize first in English?

ABC NAME bird

We know that adults learn more effectively when they are working with information that is relevant to their lives, reflects authentic contexts, and is responsive to their needs. (Grognet *et. al.* 1997) Yet in many adult ESL literacy classes, students spend time learning the alphabet before doing any reading, and when they do begin reading, often the sentences contain vocabulary and ideas not relevant to their lives. Reading, "The little pup sat on the rug" does not meet the students' critical need to read the following:

STOP Take two tablets twice a day. ***POISON*** **Help Wanted**

If we want our students to stay in class long enough to acquire the skills—and the self confidence—to become self-sufficient, productive employees, family members, and participants in their communities, we need to streamline our approach to ESL literacy to enable them to learn quickly, to see frequent proof of their progress, and to have input into what is being taught.

What is the basis for such a system? This article looks at performance-based literacy instruction, a pragmatic approach to a widespread problem. In Part 1, we will mention some of the factors that affect learning, and the differences between literate and non-literate learners. We will suggest some ways in which teaching reading to native speakers is, or should be, different from the process of teaching reading to adult ESL learners. Finally, we will examine some critical factors which impact motivation and retention.

In Part II, we will look more closely at performance-based literacy instruction: the rationale and some thoughts on whole language, sight words, and phonics. We will also look at different types of literacy: document literacy, numeracy, and employment-related content for beginning readers.

A list of resources used in this article is included at the end, and a few illustrative charts are included in the appendices. Finally, the appendices contains brief reviews of four competency-based literacy texts currently on the market and list additional resources which are available to literacy instructors and programs.

For additional information on any aspect of this paper, or to arrange training, contact Spring Institute for International Studies. See page 31.

Part 1

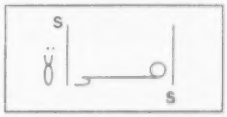
Adult ESL Learners

A. Factors affecting learning

1. Language and alphabet

We may think of the hardest tasks in learning to read a foreign language as memorizing new vocabulary and verb forms, working through unfamiliar syntax, and manipulating new sound systems. And of course, we're right. However, the task is much greater when the learner must also work with a new alphabet. Which word do you think you could learn to read more quickly?

mujer



(Both words mean *woman*, the first in Spanish, the second in Arabic.) Even discerning whether the second word is right-side up may be an initial challenge! In addition to working with non-Roman alphabets, readers may have learned to read from right to left, or top to bottom. However, even when the learners' alphabet looks the same, confusion can still abound. To look at one simple example, a Spanish speaker who continues to pronounce the letter "I"as "EE" will have trouble making herself understood.

Of course, the learner from a pre-literate society, a world in which the written word is not regularly used, has more of a culture shock than one who reads in the native language but not in English. When pre-literate learners move into a world where print information appears everywhere, and everyone is expected to be able to handle it, the task can seem overwhelming.

2. Expectations

Culture impacts learning to read beyond the obvious differences in first languages. In my first year as a teacher for foreign students preparing for American universities, I taught a reading class to intermediate students. One of my students, a classroom teacher from Kuwait, told me in no uncertain terms that I was not teaching correctly: everyone knew that all the students should stand and read in unison. It took some discussion before he would accept the fact that this would not occur in the university classes for which he was preparing.

Mary McGroarty, in her excellent *ERIC Digest*, "Cross-Cultural Issues in Adult ESL Literacy Classrooms" (McGroarty, 1993), discusses the conflict that sometimes occurs regarding appropriate roles for learners and teachers. When a classroom is

informal, with the teacher treating the adult students as equals, or when problem-solving or discussion has precedence over correction of grammar and pronunciation, learners may feel that the teacher is not fulfilling her role. Some topics may be culturally sensitive as well, such as gender-related issues, discipline of children, or even calling "911" in emergencies, if learners have backgrounds where police were seen as threatening and abusive. Literacy instructors need to research the culture of their students and acquire cross-cultural expertise. Other educators who have written about this include: Elizabeth Quintero, "Valuing Diversity in the Multicultural Classroom" (Quintero,1994), the Culture section of the *Volunteer Tutor Manual* from the Minnesota Literacy Council (1994), "Family and Intergenerational Literacy in Multicultural Communities" (Weinstein-Shr, 1998), and "Teaching Multilevel Adult ESL Classes." (Shank and Terill, 1995)

3. Gender

A Moslem tells us his wife cannot study in the same classroom with male students. An Asian wife, who is learning quickly, decides to drop out because women in her country of origin are not expected to learn to read and this is causing conflict at home. Dominant males may not allow their wives or female children to volunteer in class. These are just a few of the gender issues that may be bound to a learner's culture. Awareness of all these issues can help us to structure our classes in a way which will best respond to the needs and expectations of the learners. For more information, see McGroarty, above, or look at the resources mentioned in the Minibib, "Women and ESL Literacy." (Branaman, 1995)

4. Learning styles and modes

Most of us are aware of the research in the field related to the way we learn—visually, aurally, and kinesthetically; with our right brain or left brain. In order to give each learner as great a chance as possible to learn, we need to vary the media we use and the ways we present information. Of course, as a happy side-effect, this makes our lessons more interesting as well. The Kuwaiti student mentioned above comes from a culture where oral tradition is very important; choral reading might be a way to help such aural learners without embarrassing them. "Hands-on" learning, the most neglected modality for adults, can be accommodated through such activities as TPR(Total Physical Response), where movement is combined with directions and vocabulary. Kinesthetic learners also profit from handling real objects as they learn vocabulary: actual fruit or vegetables; tools for household repair; clothing or first aid items.

Generally, as teachers, we have a preference for a style or mode of learning. We may need to require ourselves to stretch a bit to accommodate those students who learn best in other ways. I have posted this reminder on a sticky note above my work station. This will be discussed in more detail when we look at motivation and retention.

5. Age and health

Welfare reform has created increasing interest in educating senior refugees and immigrants. Margaret Silver of the International Institute of St. Louis states in

her "17 Guiding Principles for Working with Seniors" (May 1998):

> We need to rethink our strategies for working with the elderly because some come to class with learning skills that have been eroded by time, infirmity, limited education, limited communication skills in English, and/or a loss of confidence in their own ability to learn due to a coached dependence on younger family members.

Allene Grognet, Center for Applied Linguistics, writes in "Elderly Refugees and Language Learning" (Grognet, 1998) that physical and mental health are critical factors in learning, especially with the older learner.

Strategies suggested by these authors include using kinesthetic learning, "discovery," and relevant materials. Allene states:

> Use real tasks and real materials...[to] stimulate them to look with fresh eyes at old information and to find relationships between old and new information by pointing out problems rather than telling students the solution.... Promote initiative by having a "reporting" time when they can share their discoveries with the class. Take class visits to a court, city council meeting, police station, etc. Invite visitors to come and make short presentations.

Allene Grognet suggests "...making the learning situation and the learning materials relevant to the needs and desires of the older refugees." She reminds us:

> The high drop-out rate of older refugees enrolled in many traditional adult education classes attests to the fact that older adults are not willing to tolerate what to them is boring, irrelevant content, or lessons that stress the learning of grammar rules out of context. When grammar and vocabulary are embedded in the situations refugees will encounter, they not only come to class, but they seem more willing to risk using their new language outside of the classroom. Refugees understand that they are learning English for the specific purposes they deem important, and they take it as a sign of respect when teachers acknowledge those purposes.

6. Educational background

The learner who knows how to learn comes to class with tools for tackling the different process of mastering learning to read in a new language. The learner who does not have some educational experience usually has less information upon which to draw in coping with concepts as well as fewer techniques with which to tackle the job. Lack of self-confidence is often a factor as well.

We need to be careful in looking at undereducated adults, however. They may be beginning learners, but they are *not* beginning thinkers. They have budgeted

their time and resources, handled everyday survival needs for themselves and their families, and solved the myriad of problems which face any adult. We need to recognize their abilities as adults while we provide opportunities for them to acquire basic English skills.

B. Literate vs. Non-Literate Learners

Here is the beginning of a list of the many differences (and a few of the similarities) between literate and non-literate English learners. I'm sure you can add points of your own.

Literate learners	Non-literate learners
a. Learn from print	a. Learn by doing and watching
b. Tend to be visually oriented	b. Tend to be aurally oriented
c. Make lists to remember	c. Repeat to remember
d. Spend years learning to read	d. Have limited time for learning to read
e. Know they can learn	e. Lack confidence in their learning ability
f. Have varying needs and goals	f. Have varying needs and goals
g. Learn best when content is relevant to their lives	g. Learn best when content is relevant to their lives
h. Can distinguish between important and less important points	h. May accept all content as being of equal value

Silver (1999) points out that learners from pre-literate societies may also have problems in "seeing" the third dimension in pictures: a simple line drawing of a chair on the chalkboard may not convey the concept of "chair" to someone without experience with print media. I remember a Hmong woman in my class struggling to draw her house on the chalkboard, but doing it in only two dimensions, with the outside walls appearing like tabs on the four sides of the main room. The same types of problems may arise with maps, floor plans, and other simple schematics, to say nothing of graphs, outlines, and charts.

C. Teaching reading to adult ESL learners and to native English speakers

Teaching reading is teaching reading, right? We all need to begin with the sound system and the ABCs. Or do we? This may be where we choose to begin in

teaching reading to native speakers; after all, they already know most of the words and need only to learn the decoding skills, or how to assign sounds to letters. ESL learners, however, must begin by learning the meaning; otherwise, no matter how fluently they pronounce the words, they are not reading because comprehension is not there.

Most of us spend twelve years or more in learning to read. It's extremely rare, however, to find adult learners who have the luxury of unlimited time to become literate in English. For one thing, most of the adults in our classrooms must soon find employment. Many of them have substantial responsibilities outside our classrooms. And their needs won't wait for them to learn to read, as I did, with Dick, Jane, and Spot. They need to begin with the content that is crucial to their current life situations.

Articulation may be a problem as well. Children learning in their first language have a natural facility for distinguishing and reproducing language sounds (Minnesota Literacy Council, 1994). They can work easily with the sounds they hear. Adults learning in a second language have limited abilities; they are conditioned to hear only the sounds that occur in their native languages and have less facility in reproducing unfamiliar sounds. As a result, we must give our students practice in *hearing* the English phonemes before we can expect them to produce them in their reading. An additional factor they must overcome is that most of them do not have constant exposure to English, or sufficient opportunity to speak it outside class.

We have mentioned culture as a factor in learning. There is always some alienation from the native culture in adopting a new language and its accents. Adult learners are apt to be more aware of cultural identity than are children, although it is sometimes at an unconscious level. A friend who is German decided to learn to speak English well enough to receive a Ph.D., but deliberately retained some of her accent to preserve a bit of her German identity.

All the differences are not negative, however. Adult learners, unlike children, have a wealth of experiences to draw upon, once they acquire new language to talk about them. They have a high need to know so that they can function effectively. This often results in an intrinsic motivation which the teacher can cultivate. We must respect the knowledge our learners bring with them, constantly elicit what they know, and create a learner-centered classroom where the needs and desires of the adult learners themselves are at least as important as the mandates of the funding source.

D. Motivation and Retention

We have mentioned the high drop-out rate in adult literacy classes, both for ESL students and for native English speakers. While it is not possible to solve all of the problems adult students have, there are, nevertheless, a number of things we can do to encourage and retain our learners. We look at a few of them on the next page.

1. Choose relevant content.

Relevance is predicated on a good needs assessment. This goes well beyond discovering the functional level of literacy skill which a potential learner possesses. Weddel and Van Duzer (1997) define a good needs assessment as follows:

> A needs assessment for use with adult learners of English is a tool that examines, from the perspective of the learner, what kinds of English, native language, and literacy skills the learner already believes he or she has; the literacy contexts in which the learner lives and works; what the learner wants and needs to know to function in those contexts; what the learner expects to gain from the instructional program; and what might be done in the native language or with the aid of an interpreter.

The information gained from such an assessment, along with the teacher's knowledge of what beginning readers need to learn, should provide a sound foundation for selecting the topics which will be covered in the class.

For additional information on needs assessment, see an outstanding *ERIC Digest* article, "Teaching Low-Level Adult ESL Learners." (Holt, 1995) For placement testing tools, see the section on CASAS assessment for beginning literacy in the Literacy Program (1998), Appendix F.

2. Provide ample opportunities for students to succeed, and do so from the first day.

a. Work at the student's level.

The students' literacy levels should have been tested before they entered your classroom. If at all possible, provide a separate class for literacy-level students, who need more personal attention than students with independent learning skills. If they absolutely must be in a multilevel class, try to find an enthusiastic volunteer who will work with students as they practice the lesson you have presented. Failing all else, be absolutely dedicated to organizing your class so that you have time with the beginning literacy students alone. For additional information, see "Teaching Multilevel Adult ESL Classes." (Shank and Terrill, 1995) The introduction to *The Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary Program* (Templin-Imel, 1996) also provides several suggestions for working with a literate/illiterate mix, such as using word cards for individual and pair practice, working with mixed pairs and small groups, and providing activities for more experienced learners.

b. Monitor comprehension regularly.

We all know that, when we ask our students if they understand, they will say, "Yes, Teacher." To be sure that we are getting our ideas across, we must build in more sophisticated ways to test comprehension. Here are a few examples, given in order of ascending difficulty:

1. Have students point to an indicated item: "Show me the wrench."
2. Have students demonstrate understanding: "Women, stand up."

3. Ask yes/no questions: "Is lettuce a vegetable?"

4. Ask either/or questions: "Is this a tablet or a capsule?"

Another simple technique is to have students tell us what they learned in the last lesson. For further suggestions, see tip #13 in "ABC's for Tutors: 26 Teaching Tips," *Meaning comes first!* Brod (1998).

c. Develop a set of competencies as the basis for learning.

After the assessment decide on the general topics to be covered in the class. This topic "map" can provide a logical way to organize instruction. You may decide, for instance, that students need health care information. Competencies for this topic might include being able to identify basic parts of the body, describe common symptoms, and follow instructions in a medical exam. The competency list for each topic keeps you on target, as well as provides a way of notifying students of their success. It also provides the context which enhances instruction. Learners can help you to prioritize the list to best meet their needs, starring the objectives they are most interested in.

If you want guidance on where to start, the updated MELT document (Grognet, 1997) suggests the following topics. The items in parentheses are included within the main topic heads:

- Basic Language (Clarification, Personal Identification, Social Language, Time)
- Community Services (Telephone)
- Consumer Economics (Banking, Shopping, Money)
- Employment (Finding a Job, On the Job)
- Health
- Housing
- Transportation and Directions

d. Establish discrete, short-term, measurable goals.

Students often come to class because they want to get their GEDs, help their children with their homework, or get a better job. These are long-range goals, and may soon seem unreachable to students struggling with basic literacy. Help them see their progress by establishing immediately obtainable goals, and making sure they are constantly aware of their progress. They can learn to write an absence note to their children's teachers, for example, by filling in appropriate words in a standard format, a readily achievable task that can be related to greater involvement with their children's education. As they learn *STOP* and *Turn left/right,* relate this to their desire to get a driver's license. (See paragraph f. below.)

e. Sequence content carefully so that there is a smooth continuum for learning.

In working with non-literate students, it is particularly important to "begin at the beginning" and build gradually and cumulatively. If you are a beginning teacher

or tutor, a good commercial text, such as *The Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary Literacy Program,* will be of great help here. It is essential that learners, especially beginners, understand the meaning of new words before they produce them in any form. Generally speaking, the guideline is to have students listen to new information before they try to say it, and to practice reading items before they write them. Many good teachers introduce upper case before lower. First, differences between the shapes of upper case letters are usually easier to see. Second, many of the words readers meet first are in upper case: STOP, EXIT, KEEP OUT.

f. Be sure learners know what they've learned, and when they're learned it.

Donna Price-Machado in San Diego works with students to label their learning. (Price-Machado, 1997) When they have finished a lesson, they return to the agenda which was on the board at the first of the lesson and discuss what they learned. Although this process is used with CASAS Levels 4-6, even beginners can refer to a list, posted in the classroom, of the performance objectives or competencies which the class is learning. As each is mastered, checks can be made on the chart for the whole class, or on charts individual students keep in their notebooks, where they decide at which point they consider themselves successful. At the literacy level, the items on the checklist should be small, explicit, and achievable: *Can write home address. Can print first and last names.* As learners realize what they can do, they gain a sense of achievement and pride, what some of us call the "Eureka Factor": *I can do it!*

g. Review regularly and frequently.

Review is absolutely essential for all of us, but it doesn't have to be dull or repetitious. Review can be in the form of board games, word card activities, pair dictation, guessing games, categorizing exercises, charades, or other activities which are fun for students. Every activity should have a purpose, but, if it is entertaining or engaging as well, retention is greater. A low anxiety level in the classroom is key to student participation. (Grognet, *et. al.,* 1997)

3. Make the classroom a comfortable place to develop self-esteem.

a. Develop a learner-centered classroom.

Adult learners function best in settings where they have input into what is learned as well as in how it is learned. This begins, of course, with effective needs assessment. Once learning objectives have been established—incorporating what learners themselves indicate as their goals—learners can help in deciding which objectives for the group are priorities and the order in which they are to be studied. Learner-centered also means that the teacher is aware of which techniques students are more comfortable with, and which learning modes are most effective, while encouraging students to develop additional learning strategies. For example, I know that I am a strong visual learner. I felt great frustration when a teacher forced me to meet new words in another language aurally, without the comfortable rein-

forcement of seeing the written form. The experience was an eye-opener to me in how I presented materials to my own classes.

b. Respect their experience by eliciting what they know.

Students who lose their ability to communicate when they confront a new language have often lost their professions as well, a key to identity for most of us. Giving them the opportunity to share their knowledge is a way of showing that we value their experience, and want to give them the respect they deserve, which is key to successful acculturation. A doctor in her country of origin can demonstrate first aid techniques to the class as you supply the language. A farmer can show fellow students how to choose a good watermelon at the supermarket.

If you disregard students' experience, you can quickly lose their confidence in your ability to teach them. Spending an hour teaching students something they already know and have mastered will leave both you and the students very frustrated.

Many recent textbook series open with a picture and questions which immediately engage the learners in the activity, give the teacher a chance to assess what students already know, and credit the learners for life experience as they build concepts, meaning, and vocabulary. Examples include *Crossroads* from Oxford University Press, *LifePrints* from the New Readers Press, and *Real-Life English* from Steck-Vaughn.

c. Give them maximum opportunity to practice English.

In a learner-centered classroom, it is the students who do most of the talking. After all, the teacher already speaks English! Having students work in pairs or small groups gives them much more talking time. A peer is often a better model for a senior than you may be. (Silver, 1999) Seeing someone in similar circumstances succeed makes it more possible to believe you might also succeed. Making sure that all language skills are integrated—with provision for listening, speaking, reading and writing—is the most effective way to develop real communicative competence. Giving students a chance to talk about what they know also makes them feel that they are an important part of the learning process.

If we set up our classes so that students can role-play the situations they need to manage outside the classroom, we can help them develop the self-confidence to become independent. Classroom problem-solving situations provide a way to elicit what students know, develop critical thinking, and build teamwork skills. Activities which allow students to share information about their lives before they came to this country can serve as good mental health/acculturation exercises. The ELT technical assistance booklet, *Cultural Adjustment, Mental Health, and ESL: The Refugee Experience, the Role of the Teacher, and ESL Activities* has a section entitled "ESL Activities to Address Mental Health Issues." (Adkins, Birman and Sample, 1999)

d. Help them become independent learners.

Good teachers are people whose goal is to work themselves out of a job. They also place the responsibility for learning where it belongs—with the learners them-

selves. *The Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary Literacy Program* is innovative in that it teaches true beginners how to use a picture dictionary independently, empowering them to function as individuals.

Be warned of a ploy many kind-hearted teachers are prone to use, which encourages dependency on the teacher:

> Don't kill your students with kindness. When a teacher answers for a student, it sends a strong message that he/she thinks the student is incompetent to answer for him/herself. Build competence and confidence. Help the student with focus questions. Give the student a little extra time (but don't leave him with egg on his face; five seconds is a good rule of thumb, but not longer.) Be stingy but sincere with your "Good!" Students know when they have or have not done well and distrust a teacher who is too free with congratulations. (Silver, 1998)

4. Use multiple learning modes to match varied learning styles.

a. Rely on visuals.

A picture is worth a thousand words, especially if the words are in a new language. If, like most of us, you can't draw, a good picture file is a blessing—but a good picture dictionary is much more portable! I can hardly imagine working with true beginners without one. A topic-based dictionary like *The Oxford Picture Dictionary* (Shapiro and Adelson-Goldstein, 1998) allows for quick reference and clear delineation. Don't forget flash cards, the blackboard, posters, and other visual reinforcements. Holt (1995) is also a good source for suggestions for visuals.

b. Reinforce learning with listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities.

When we use a variety of activities and approaches to teach the same material, we accommodate learning style preferences while keeping instruction lively. In addition, we do a great deal to encourage fluency and retention, the keys to communicative competence. When we learn, we depend on our eyes, ears, and voices to acquire new concepts, vocabulary, and syntax. Provide those same channels for your students.

c. Use color cues.

Color is another code which we can use to help our students remember. In teaching color words, write each word on an index card in a marker of the same color: i. e., write *red* with a red pen. If specific colors are customary in environmental print, make use of those, such as a red hexagon as the background for the word STOP. Colors can also be used to help students grasp word order in sentences and questions without all the baggage of grammatical terminology. (See Brod, 1998, pp. 2-3.)

d. Use music and verse.

Can you remember songs you learned in a foreign language in grade school or junior high? It's no accident that commercials utilize these approaches, since they draw our attention and stick in our minds. In addition to aiding memory, music and rhyme are wonderful breaks in a print-based lesson. You can use children's songs, like the alphabet song and counting songs, commercial or homemade jazz chants or raps, or some of the many materials on the market especially developed to practice grammar and structures. (Graham 1978, 1993) Thank goodness most of these come with audio tapes for those of us who have an affinity for music but can't carry a tune. You will, of course, want to select songs and verses that reinforce the content and vocabulary of the lesson and assist learners to attain the competency objectives.

e. Utilize kinesthetic for tactile learners.

Give learners hands-on experience in utilizing the kinesthetic approach to learning. This can be as simple as bringing real food or clothing for students to handle in class as they learn vocabulary, or as varied as experiential learning from class field trips. Visit a health clinic, for example, and have health care professionals demonstrate simple commands during a health exam. Using a stethoscope and blood pressure cuff will be much more effective than looking at pictures in the classroom.

Here are three simple ways to give hands-on experience.

1) **Word cards.** If students have a chance to move word cards around until they have created sentences, word order patterns can be mastered more readily. Another hands-on activity involves having students categorize sets of word cards, into sets you determine, such as fruits and vegetables, or categories students create on their own, such as foods they like and dislike. You may find that your students like to have their own sets of word cards to practice with at home and perhaps share with their children.

2) **Total Physical Response.** TPR is a technique to practice listening comprehension. It allows both you and your students to demonstrate vocabulary. Command forms are used with real objects and actions. For beginning students, you can teach simple classroom commands, like "Stand up!," "Sit down!," "Open your book!," etc. In worksite or pre-employability classes, common workplace commands can be practiced, such as steps in using a time clock or putting tools away. The teacher gives a command as he or she acts it out. Then students mimic the action. When students are comfortable with a single command, more steps can be added. Next, students can take turns giving the commands to the teacher or class members. You may gradually move to using printed command cards.

3) **Charades and role play** To review vocabulary, you and your students can take turns acting out verbs while watchers try to name

the action. Later verbs can be written on cards, placed in a pile, and drawn by a student who then reads them or acts them out. Simple role-plays, from greetings or asking for someone's telephone number to shopping for clothing items, can give students opportunities to practice the language they need in the safety of the classroom.

Part II

Performance-Based Instruction

A. Rationale

Competency-based education (CBE), the foundation of the Mainstream English Language Training project developed for the refugee influx of the 1980s (Grognet *et. al.*, updated 1997), was defined by the U.S. Office of Education as "a performance-based process leading to mastery of basic and life skills necessary for the individual to function proficiently in society." Most of us now teach for communicative competency rather than for knowledge of grammar, a mode which was slow and did not result in the ability to communicate one's needs, wishes, or ideas. **We teach what students will be able to do with language**, not what they know about grammar and vocabulary. Grammar and vocabulary are just two of the tools in our language-teaching work box.

This movement is now being incorporated into the latest effective literacy-level textbooks. **We teach what students will be able to do with what they can read and write**, not what they know about phonics and the alphabet, now also recognized as tools toward an end, not an end in themselves. This has done a great deal to streamline the literacy process and involve students in what they are learning.

B. Whole Language, Sight Words, and Phonics

The goal of most effective adult ESL programs is communicative competence: the ability of learners to function effectively in situations which require knowledge of language: heard, spoken, written, or read. Another way of stating this is to say that learning is **meaning-centered.** (Templin-Imel, 1996). The primary emphasis is placed on what is being communicated, not on grammatical patterns, vocabulary lists, or phonics "families." The content must be purposeful, functional, and real. Writing and reading, like speaking and listening, begin with understanding a whole block of language before examining individual words or sounds. This is what is commonly meant by the whole language approach. (Rigg, 1993)

Does this mean that we don't teach sight words? Yes and no. If the first thing a learner reads is "My name is Kue Vang" (a whole sentence), it's obvious that there is value in her seeing that "name" is also a part of almost every form new readers

must fill out. Other reasons for teaching sight words include the fact that some words are used so often in environmental print that students will learn to read them simply because they see them so often: STOP, MEN, EXIT, OPEN. Other words defy analysis by sound and spelling and simply must be memorized: daughter, know, laugh. And some words, of course, are so important that they must be memorized before students have developed their decoding skills: POLICE, POISON, DANGER, RESTROOMS, HOSPITAL. (Minnesota Literacy Council, 1997). For a list of useful environmental print sight words, see Appendix B, drawn from the beginning levels of the MELT competencies.

What about phonics? Jodi Crandall (1993) states that "...it is difficult to justify a delay in presenting meaningful reading passages to adults whose time for education is severely limited by their other responsibilities and to focus, instead, on phonics for the crucial initial periods of instruction." Does that mean that we don't teach phonics at all? No, but it's not where we begin. After learners have worked with the environmental print words STOP, STAIRS, and STREET, for example, we write the words on a single large list that stays in the classroom, and point out that the words all begin with the same sound, reading them aloud so that learners can focus on the initial sound of each word. Learners add other words to the list as they acquire them. Thus, sound/symbol correspondence is introduced *after* learners have acquired a bank of familiar words, giving them a chance to discover for themselves how letters and sounds are related. For ideas on incorporating this into performance-based lessons, see the "Sounds" pages in Templin-Imel (1996).

C. Document Literacy (Form Language)

The first task new learners are sure to face—in school, at a social services office, at a health clinic—is filling out forms. That means that document literacy, or form language, is highly relevant to the everyday lives of our adult learners. In addition to reading the common words, they need to become familiar with different type faces and upper and lower case letters, e.g., *Name*, NAME, name, different terms for the same information (country of origin, birthplace, place of birth), and abbreviations (SS#, St., DOB). See Appendix C for some of the words you may wish to include.

Don't overwhelm students by trying to teach too many new terms and words in one lesson. You can begin by having them fill in their names, adding one new piece of information with each lesson until students can fill out a simple job application. This can keep students' frustration levels under control while allowing for immediate success. See the Form Language pages in Templin-Imel (1996) for a model.

D. Numeracy

The use of numbers is certainly not restricted to math class. We know our students need to write telephone numbers, but may not be aware that phone numbers are not the same in all cultures, even those with advanced communication

systems, both in the number of numbers used and in how they are given orally. Look at the following telephone numbers, for example: "494-6833"; "(303) 494-3012"; "26 73 99" (Mexico); "+44 1865 267622" (international number) and even "911." See Appendix D for examples of other common number-related items.

E. Employment-related content for beginning readers

As most of us are aware, welfare reform has shortened the time most refugees and immigrants have available to learn English before entering the workforce. Most beginning ESL learners are still usually placed in entry-level jobs where tasks can be demonstrated, or where there are peers from the same language group who can answer their questions. However, the more quickly new employees learn the English skills they need, including the ability to read work-related material, the better their chances are for job retention and promotion.

If you are involved in workplace literacy classes on site, you obviously want to discover the critical things they must be handled in the specific job location. If you are preparing learners for early entry into employment, we are beginning to see work-related materials designed for inexperienced learners. *English ASAP! Connecting English to the Workplace,* from Steck-Vaughn, has a literacy level. *Put English to Work!,* from Contemporary Books/National Textbook Company, also features a literacy level. For sample pre-employability lessons for low-level learners, contact Spring Institute for International Studies and ask for the ELT/TA "SCANS Plans."

Part III

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Part IV

APPENDICES

A. "17 Guiding Principles for Working With Seniors," M. Silver, 1998.

B. "Sight Words—Reading Environmental Print," beginning-level sight words from the Mainstream English Language Training Program, Core Curriculum, Grognet *et. al.*, 1997

C. "Document Literacy—Reading and Writing Form Language"

D. "Numeracy—Reading and Writing Numbers"

E. "Textbook Review," Thunbnail reviews of four competency-based, literacy-level commercial textbooks (from *Compass Points 3*, Summer, 1998)

F. "Literacy Programs" (from *Compass Points 3*, Summer, 1998)

G. "Selected Resources for Adult ESL," Miriam Burt

Appendix A

17 Guiding Principles For Working With Seniors

1. Have several short lesson segments (10-15 minutes each) rather than one long period.
2. Have a very clearly defined information or teaching "nugget" in each lesson segment.
3. Avoid discussions. Keep the lesson focused.
4. Build "images."
5. Plan many hands-on activities. Use kinesthetic learning.
6. Use a planned lesson "exit" question. (I stand in the doorway at break time and ask every student trying to exit, "How many stars on the flag?" or "Who was the first president?" Anything to encourage them to hold on to information.)
7. **Start** the next lesson with the "exit" question from the last session.
8. Use listening-reporting as a preliminary to listening-dictation.
9. Don't kill your students with kindness. When a teacher answers for a student, it sends a strong message that he/she thinks the student is incompetent to answer for himself. Help the student with focus questions. Give the student a little extra time. Build competence and confidence.
10. Encourage groups. A peer is often a better model for a senior than you may be.
11. Let students use native language to problem solve, **but they must report in English**.
12. Start your lesson only when you have eye contact with **everyone**.
13. Consider "discovery," a key instructional strategy. Use real tasks and real materials. Help students to discover reality for themselves by handling materials. Stimulate them to look with fresh eyes at old information and to find relationships between old and new information by pointing out problems rather than telling students the solution. Encourage them to ask "why" questions again—many have given up on finding answers. Promote initiative by having a "reporting" time when they can share their discoveries with the class. Take class visits to a court, city council meeting, police station, etc. Invite visitors to come and make short presentations.
14. Have a performance-based curriculum. Establish time-frames for learning. Use observational checklists.
15. Besides ongoing classroom interaction, make a point of talking privately to each student about their progress as often as you can. Keep records of what you say.
16. Require thinking and deducting.
17. Spiraling! Spiraling! Spiraling! You may get tired of saying that the Constitution is the "highest law of the land" but you can never tell when what you're saying finally impacts and lasting learning takes place.

Margaret Silver, *Compass Points 3, Summer, 1998.*

Appendix B

Sight Words—Reading Environmental Print

Basic Language	TELEPHONE	PHONE
	MONDAY	MON
	DECEMBER	DEC
Community Services	FIRE	HOSPITAL
	POLICE	EMERGENCY
	POISON	PHARMACY
	DRUG STORE	
Employment	HELP WANTED	DANGER
	KEEP OUT	
Health	ASPIRIN	CAPSULE
	COUGH SYRUP	TEASPOON (TSP.)
	TABLET	TABLESPOON (TBSP.)
	HOUR (HR.)	TAKE 2 TSP. 3 TIMES DAILY
Housing	EXIT	FIRE ESCAPE
Consumer Economics	IN	OUT
	UP	DOWN
	OPEN	CLOSED
	SALE	CASHIER
	EXP.	SELL BY
Transportation	BUS STOP	WALK
	DON'T WALK	ONE WAY
	NO PARKING	KEEP RIGHT
	DO NOT ENTER	

Selected from Shirley Brod, *Mainstream English Language Training Core Curriculum*, beginning level, updated by Grognet, et. al., English Language Training Technical Assistance Project. Denver, Colorado: Spring Institute for International Studies, 1997.

Appendix C

Document Literacy—Reading and Writing Form Language

NAME **Name** *Name* NAME name *NAME*

FIRST/first LAST/last MIDDLE INITIAL/MI

PRINT Write **Sign here**

ADDRESS

Street/St. No. Apartment/Apt. City State ZIP Code

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER **Soc. Sec. No.** **SS#**

□□□ □□ □□□□ □□□□□□□□□

Marital Status **Maiden name**

Family members • Name • Relationship • Age

Birthplace

PLACE OF BIRTH

Country of Origin

Title: **Mr.** **Mrs.** **Ms.** **Miss**

Height Weight Color of eyes

Postal English: Addressing letters and packages, using return address

Shirley Brod, Spring Institute for International Studies.

Appendix D

Numeracy—Reading and Writing Numbers

Telephone numbers:

494-6833 (303) 494-3012 911

25 73 99 +44 1865 267622

Addresses:

Street Apt. No. ZIP Code P. O. Box 2191

Language:

SS# Age Weight

Money amounts:

Total amount due:

9¢ $.09 $200 and no/100

$32,500.00 $32.500,00

Aisle numbers and alphanumeric codes:

2B B27

Sizes:

S, M, L 8, 10, 12 9EEE 6N

Dates:

9/23/97 23/9/97

Time:

1:00 1 o'clock 1:15

2:30 a.m. 2:45 PM

Math:

x = times ÷ = divided by

+ = plus − = minus = [=] equals

Shirley Brod, Spring Institute for International Studies

Appendix E

TEXTBOOK REVIEWS

Thumbnail reviews of four competency-based literacy-level textbooks

These four literacy texts are designed for limited English Speakers. All of the texts are competency-based, are organized by topics, integrate the four skills, and aim at communicative competence. We will address three points for each text: Focus, strengths, and weaknesses.

Basic Oxford Picture Dictionary Literacy Program, Garnet Templin-Imel. Oxford University Press

Focus: Meaning and comprehension through whole-language

Strengths: For true beginners; photocopiable pages for flexibility; fosters independent learning; wide range of enrichment activities

Weaknesses: Complexity for teacher (it takes time to learn all the components)

Longman ESL Literacy, Yvonne Wong Nishio. Longman

Focus: Communicative competence

Strengths: Open, easy-to-read format; addresses a variety of learning modes; carefully-sequenced presentation; good integration of skills

Weaknesses: Presumes some literacy in native language; does not begin with reading (undue emphasis on names of letters); listening tapescript not in student book

Real Life English (Literacy Level), Steck-Vaughn

Focus: Competency-based approach

Strengths: Simple to teach, utilizes consistent format (a picture provides common input, activities follow the same order in each chapter)

Weaknesses: Not for pre-literate students, lack of enrichment activities

Take Charge, Edna Diolata. McGraw Hill

Focus: Student empowerment through student-centered learning (Frierian approach)

Strengths: Student involvement, practical content, varied activities

Weaknesses: Not for true beginners, small print, lack of carefully-structured literacy presentation and practice

Appendix F

Literacy Programs

Adult Literacy Resource Center, Chicago, Illinois

The Adult Learning Resources Center provides adult English as a Second Language professional development services to adult and family educators. Resources and upcoming activities include:

- Pilot testing of ESL Instructors Mentoring program
- A Crossroads Cafe Lighthouse initiative
- Parents as Educational Partners (PEP) Curriculum and Training
- Illinois Family Education Institute which is comprised of five workshops: Program Administration, Program Evaluation, Interactive Parent-Child Activities, Parenting Education, and Family Support
- Citizenship Training and Services
- Topic specific workshops for adult ESL instructors and staff
- A series, *Foundations of Effective Instruction,* which includes Background Knowledge, Needs Assessment and Lesson Planning, Classroom Management, ESL Content Areas, Assessment, and Professional Development
- Workshops and technical assistance, technology support for software decisions and usage, and materials and bibliography support

ALRC ESL publications include:

- *A Good Beginning: A Manual for Orientation of Adult Literacy/ABE/GED/ ESL Instructors and Staff.* 1995
- *Adult ESL Suggested Materials* (Annotated). 1995
- *Beyond the Library Card: An ESL Curriculum for Effective Library Use.* 1993

For more information on these services or products contact Sue Barauski, Director, ALRC, 1855 Mt. Prospect Rd., Des Plaines, IL 60018 Ph: 847-803-3535; Fax: (847) 803-3231; web site: www.center.affect.org.

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System and Literacy (CASAS): Assessment for Literacy Programs

CASAS offers several assessment instruments that can be used with learners in literacy programs. The *Beginning Literacy Reading Assessment* assesses the reading ability of individuals with very limited literacy skills. There are two sections of this consumable test: a literacy enabling skills section and a life skills section that focuses on content relevant to everyday life. These tests can be used as an appraisal or for pre/post survey achievement testing.

The CASAS *Beginning ESL Level Completion Test* assesses attainment of beginning level reading, listening, and grammar skills. This test can be used to document

learner outcomes and provide program accountability to funding sources and other stakeholders. Teachers can use test results to target instruction and to inform their decisions about individual student level promotion. Learners will benefit from knowing the skills they have already learned and those they may need to study and whether they are ready to be promoted to a higher level of instruction.

CASAS Level Descriptors for ESL provide descriptions of student proficiency at seven instructional levels and correlations of these levels with the Student Performance Levels (SPLs). The CASAS *Instructional Materials Guide* correlates published ESL instructional materials to each instructional level.

Visit the CASAS website at www.casas.org for more information on the full range of CASAS assessment, training and resources.

Laubach Literacy, Syracuse, New York

Teaching Adults, An ESL Resource Book was developed by Laubach Literacy Action and published by New Readers Press. As a resource for teachers and tutors, it addresses second language acquisition and cross-cultural adaptation as well as describing the sound system, and includes 61 activities for teaching English to adults. A detailed training video is also available. Tom Mueller, a major contributor to this effort, can be reached for advice and questions at 315-422-9121, ext.351.

Colorado Department of Education, Office of Adult Education

Family Literacy: Getting Started, is a program guide available from the Colorado Department of Education, Office of Adult Education. It describes how to set up a family literacy program tailored to the needs of your community. Contact CDE Office of Adult Education at 201 E. Colfax Avenue Denver, CO 80203-1799.

Minnesota Literacy Council, St. Paul, Minnesota

Founded in 1972, Minnesota's award-winning literacy council has provided literacy training through two Twin Cities learning centers and to a network now including 69 statewide literacy projects. In 1981, the program was expanded to include ESL literacy. Their easy-to-use manual describes adult second language learners and their cultures; addresses goals and assessment; and provides information on listening and speaking, pronunciation, literacy, grammar, and vocabulary and spelling. It concludes with a section on lesson planning and a resources list. The loose-leaf manual is available for $19 without a binder, or $21 with the binder. To order, contact them at the following location:

Laura Jaeger
Minnesota Literacy Council
475 North Cleveland Ave., Suite 303
St. Paul, MN 55104
Ph: 651-645-2277
Fax: 651-645-2272

Compass Points 3, Summer 1998

Appendix G

Selected Resources for Adult ESL

Miriam Burt, National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE)

The following annotated list describes clearinghouses and centers where information and resources are available for educators working with adults learning English as a second language (ESL). This is not an all-inclusive list; I have attempted to select only those clearinghouses, centers, and electronic networks that have relevance for and are accessible to the practitioner working with adults learning English as a second language, rather than those that have little value to anyone except the researcher. I have included street, phone, fax, e-mail, and web addresses (when existent) for all. If there are questions or comments about this list, please contact Miriam Burt, Associate Director, The Center for Applied Linguistics, 4646 40th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20016-1859. Ph: 202-362-0700; Fx: 202-362-3740 (fax); E-mail: miriam@cal.org

A. Clearinghouses

National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE)

The George Washington University Center for Study of Language and Education
2011 Eye Street, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20006
Ph: 202-467-0867 Fx: 800-531-9347
E-mail: Askncbe@ncbe.gwu.edu Web: www.ncbe.gwu.edu

NCBE, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA), collects, analyzes, synthesizes, and disseminates information relating to the effective education of linguistically and culturally diverse students. Although its focus is K-12, its weekly newsletter, *Newsline*, contains articles pertinent to family literacy and to parents of bilingual students. Also, its on-line database contains information on software, employment opportunities, and a directory of nonprofit resources on the Internet arranged by both topic and geographic location.

NCSALL, pronounced "nick-saul," is a collaborative effort between the Harvard University Graduate School of Education and World Education. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education through the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), its mission is to help the field of adult basic education, including ESL, define a comprehensive research agenda, then pursue basic and applied research; to build partnerships between researchers and practitioners; and to disseminate research and best practices to practitioners, scholars, and policy makers. Perhaps the most useful resource at NCSALL for adult ESL service providers is the quarterly newsletter *Focus on Basics*. This publication contains information about current research and what this research means to teachers in the adult ABE and ESL classroom.

National Institute for Literacy (NIFL)

800 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 200
Washington, DC 20202-7560
Ph: 202-632-1500 Fx: 202-632-1512
E-mail for ESOL questions: ajohson@nifl.gov
Web: www.novel.nifl.gov/HomePage.html

NIFL was created by the National Literacy Act of 1991. To learn who to contact in a certain region of the country for technical assistance and resources such as the appropriate state literacy resource center and the regional hubs, access NIFL's web page at www.novel.nifl.gov/ hubsmap.htm. NIFL manages an Internet-based information and communications system for the literacy field. Of print materials produced or distributed by NIFL, of particular interest to ESL practitioners is the *Talk Time Handbook*, written for ESL tutors, published by NIFL and available by calling the hotline number. NIFL also sponsors NIFL-ESL, the electronic listserv, facilitated by staff at the National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE).

The Outreach and Technical Assistance Network (OTAN)

NIFL Regional IV Hub Literacy Network Project
9738 Lincoln Village Drive
Sacramento, CA 95827-3399
Ph: 916-228-2583
Fx: 916-228-2676
E-mail: support@otan.dni.us
Web: www.otan.dni.us/

OTAN is a project which provides technical assistance, communication linkage, and information to adult education providers, including ESL instructors, funded by the California Department of Education, Adult Education Unit (under section 353). OTAN's strength is facilitating the educational use of software and other technology in the adult ABE and ESL classroom, especially in the state of California and in the Region Four hub area. (To find out which hub serves your area in the country, contact NIFL at 202-632-1500, or check out its web page at www.novel.nifl.gov).

Staff Development Institute

9738 Lincoln Village Drive
Sacramento, CA 95827-3399
Ph: 800-488-1788
Web: www.otan.din.us/webfarm/sdi

Also housed at the Sacramento County Office of Education is the Staff Development Institute (SDI). SDI is also a California section 353 project funded with federal adult education moneys. This institute offers training and technical assistance to California teachers, administrators, and programs in ABE, ESL, ESL Citizenship, Family Literacy, and Instructional Technology.

U.S. Department of Education, Division of Adult Education and Literacy Clearinghouse, Office of Vocational and Adult Education

600 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-7240
Ph: 202-205-9996
Fx: 202-205-8973
E-mail: Tammy_Fortune@ed.gov
Web: www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/AdultEd/InfoBoard/clearing.html

The Clearinghouse provides referral services and disseminates publications of state and national significance, including reference materials on adult education and literacy-related activities. Resource publications include information on English as a second language, state literacy resource centers, family literacy, workplace literacy, teacher training, and staff development, working with volunteers, and the use of technology.

B. Non-profit Organizations

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)

8910 Clairmont Mesa Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92123
Ph: 619-292-2900
Fx: 619-292-2910
E-mail.: casasstaff@otan.dni.us
Web: www.casas.org

CASAS is a nonprofit organization that provides learner-centered curriculum management, assessment, and evaluation systems to education, training, and workplace programs for the public and private sector. Its competencies have been correlated to the SCANS competencies and foundation skills. Originating and based in California, the CASAS system is used in programs in adult basic education (ABE) and ESL programs across the country. A variety of standardized and alternative CASAS assessment instruments measure listening, speaking, reading, writing, math and higher order thinking skills in functional life skills and employability contexts. The CASAS Web page at www.casas.org provides information on CASAS resources and summaries of Promising Practices being implemented in ABE and ESL programs in California.

Illinois ESL Adult Education Service
Adult Learning Resource Center (ALRC)

1855 Mt. Prospect Road
Des Plaines, IL 60018
Ph: 803-847-3535
Fx: 847-803-3231
E-mail: sbarauski@irc-desplaines.org
Web: www.center.affect.org/alrc/Default..htm

As part of Illinois' system of state learning resource centers, the ALRC provides a

variety of adult ESL staff development activities for teachers and administrators in the Illinois area. In addition, the Center has a comprehensive selection of ESL resource materials and a software preview collection. A newsletter, *The Update*, is published two to three times a year and contains event information, book reviews, and teaching suggestions.

Laubach Literacy Action

1320 Jamesville Avenue
Box 131
Syracuse, NY 13210
Ph: 315-422-9121
Fx: 315-422-6369
Toll free (for information only): 1-888-LAUBACH (888-528-2224)
E-mail: info@laubach.org
Web: www.laubach.org

Laubach Literacy Action (LLA) is the United States program of Laubach Literacy International. Although originally established as a literacy organization for native speakers who lack literacy skills, there are materials and workshops given to tutors of adults learning English as a second language.

Literacy Assistance Center, Inc. (LAC)

84 William Street, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10038
Ph: 212-803-3300
Fx: 212-785-3685
E-mail: lacnyc@aol.com
Web: www.lacnyc.org

The LAC is a good resource for those in the New York area. It is a technical assistance agency that maintains a lending library of instructional materials and professional books related to adult basic education and ESL programs. It also has an extensive lending library and clearinghouse called the Dan Rabideau Clearinghouse. The clearinhouse contains videos, instructional software, and professional testbooks and journals. Workshop handouts and selected teacher-made instructional materials are also available at the clearinghouse. Finally, LAC publishes a monthly journal for both ABE and ESL literacy pratitioners called *Literacy Update*, available by subscription as well as on the web site.

The Spring Institute for International Studies

1610 Emerson Street
Denver, CO 80218
Ph: 303-863-0188
Fx: 303-863-0178
E-mail: springinst@earthlink.net
Web: www.springinstitute.com

The Spring Institute offers a variety of programs including pre-employment services to refugees and immigrants, ESL for refugees, a business communication

program for international business people, culture diversity training, and training for ESL teachers. Spring uses a competency-based approach. Spring Institute staff coordinate the Office of Refugee Resettlement funded English Language Training (ELT) Project, which provides technical assistance to practitioners working with adult refugees learning English.

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Inc.

1600 Cameron Street, #300
Alexandria, VA 22314
Ph: 703-836-0774
Fx: 703-836-7864
E-mail: tesol@tesol.edu
Web: www.tesol.edu

TESOL is an international professional organization whose mission is to strengthen the effective teaching and learning of English around the world, while respecting individuals' language rights. TESOL publishes the *TESOL Quarterly* (a scholarly journal), *TESOL Matters (*a newsletter), and *TESOL Journal* (a practitioner-based journal). It also publishes a bimonthly *Placement Bulletin* for job seekers.

C. Electronic Forums (Listservs)

For those who have internet access, the electronic discussion groups where practitioners can discuss issues and exchange information about activities and resources can be very useful. Three such listservs are described below. To participate in a listserv, one needs a computer, modem, and telecommunications software.

NIFL-ESL

This is an un-moderated list, facilitated by staff at the National Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education (NCLE). Discussion focuses on all issues—classroom, research, or policy—surrounding adult ESL instruction. To participate in NIFL-ESL, subscribe to it by sending an e-mail message to:

listproc@novel.nifl.gov

Type the following request in the body of the message.

subscribe NIFL-ESL firstname lastname

NIFL-Workplace

This is an unmoderated list, facilitated by staff at the Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy at Penn State. Discussion focuses on policy and practice surrounding workplace instruction for both ABE and ESL learners. To participate in NIFL-workplace, subscribe to it by sending an e-mail message to:

listproc@novel.nifl.gov

Type the following request in the body of the message.

subscribe NIFL-workplace firstname lastname

TESLIT-L

This listserv is part of the TESL-L electronic discussion forum for teachers of English as a second or foreign language. If you wish to join the TESLIT-L, you must first join TESL-L. To do this, send a e-mail to:

listserv@cunyvm.cuny.edu

In the message section type:

subscribe TESL-L firstname lastname

You will receive e-mail confirmation (probably within minutes!) of your subscription to TESL-L. That message will give you information on subscribing to some of the more focused branches, including TESLIT-L, which concentrates on adult ESL and literacy issues. You can elect to receive only TESLIT-L messages, and cut back on the larger mail volume from TESL-L, if you wish.

D. Web Sites

Dave's ESL Cafe (a WEB site only)

Web: www.pacificnet.net/~sperling/eslcafe.html

Dave's ESL Cafe is a website for ESL/EFL students and teachers of all levels from around the world. It includes such resources as a bookstore; chat room; idea page (where readers talk about what works in their classes); an idiom page; job center for both job seekers and those looking to hire teachers; a phrasal verb page; a quiz center where teachers and students can test themselves on such topics as knowledge of U.S. culture, world culture, and punctuation; and a way for teachers and students to link up electronically to speak directly with one another.

Linguistic Funland TESL (Web page only)

Web: www.linguistic-funland.com/tesl.html

Like Dave's ESL Cafe, this website for students and teachers of EFL and ESL provides teaching tips, sample activities, job listings, general advice, and links to other sites of interest to the adult ESL instructor or would-be instructor.

E. Newsletter

Hands-on English

P.O. Box 256
Crete, NE 68333
Ph: 1-800-375-4263
Fx: 402-826-3997
E-mail: hoe@navix.net

Hands-on English is a 16-page newsletter mailed six times a year. Written by teachers for teachers, it's full of practical teaching ideas, hints & tips, and photo-copyable activities for the adult ESL classroom.